

Team Hickam members spend time in DEEP FREEZE

By 1st Lt. April Conway
Support Forces Antarctica

While there wasn't a white Christmas at Hickam, three headquarters, Pacific Air Forces Airmen enjoyed the holiday with mukluks, oversized parkas and polar ice dotted with seals and the occasional penguin.

Senior Airmen Carl Cleary, Lt. Col. Rande Kaiser and Tech. Sgt. William Robinson are spending about six weeks working for Support Forces Antarctica, specifically Operation Deep Freeze at McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

Robinson volunteered to come south after talking to a chief who had passed through his office. "I talked to him more than a year ago and have been working to get here ever since," Sergeant Robinson said. Airman Cleary says he loves to travel and while the military has given him the opportunity to spend time in Cuba, Japan and Korea, he never thought he'd have the chance to come to the coldest, windiest, driest continent on earth.

While polar duty at McMurdo isn't necessarily foremost in the public's mind when they think of military missions, Operation Deep Freeze has been a military staple since 1957. The operation is tasked with supporting the National Science Foundation and its many research projects that take place in Antarctica each austral summer.

The Deep Freeze operation is currently overseen by U.S. Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., but in the coming months operational control will shift to Headquarters PACAF. Several PACAF folks have rotated through McMurdo this austral summer, learning the ropes of the operation to help ensure a smooth transition in the spring of 2005.

"Everyone is really excited about experiencing the mission here on the ice," Colonel Kaiser said, "and being able to bring some Antarctic expertise back to the staff at home can only ensure a better operation in the future."

As a services NCO and information management Airman in Antarctica, the men work together managing the logistics of personnel constantly rotating into and out of McMurdo Station on Ross Island. Cleary, a PACAF computer support squadron troop enjoys the pace of the mission. He said while he's new and learning the ropes of the job, it's a nice change.

Sergeant Robinson, an expeditionary combat support manager assigned to the Pacific AEF center, is a specialist who facilitates getting deployers out the door. On the ice he has much more broad duties, everything from managing billeting logistics to representing the SFA on various committees in the community.

At Hickam, Colonel Kaiser is the 502nd Air Operations Squadron flight commander. Day to day her flight is responsible for coordination of PACAF current operations, such as command and control of airlift, bombers, forward units, weather evacuations in the theater. At McMurdo she's no less busy in her logistical support position, but on a much smaller scale. "The military community here is only about 130 people," Colonel Kaiser said. "It's a close-knit community and it's easy to get things done with a single phone call."



Courtesy photo

Senior Airmen Carl Cleary, Lt. Col. Rande Kaiser and Tech. Sgt. William Robinson are all deployed in support of Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica. All three members are from Hickam.

While much of life on the ice is structured with long hours and a six-day work week, the trio did find time to participate in activities outside of work. An active recreation community allowed them to join the office bowling league, making evenings comical with the two heavily warped lanes constructed at McMurdo in 1961. Other polar pursuits took on new meaning below the 60th parallel. "We went sledding one day and I scared myself with how fast we got going," Airman Cleary said. "There are

steep hills but no trees or bushes to slow you down."

Duty lengths for military folks in Antarctica range from five weeks to six months. The military community, though, makes up only a small portion of the McMurdo residents in the summer. Hundreds of scientists, researchers, heavy equipment operators and support personnel make up the diverse population of the station. A lunch table in the dining facility may host the foremost ozone depletion expert in the world, an aircraft mechanic, a univer-

sity professor on leave as a custodian on the ice, and a professional dive instructor from Hawaii who now gathers mollusk specimens from frigid polar water.

Airman Cleary said he enjoys the friendly, relaxed atmosphere McMurdo offers and the weather, he admits was of concern, really isn't much different than in his home state of Delaware. "Of course it's winter at home and summer here," he said, "but it isn't as big a factor as I thought it'd be."

Antarctica facts

Population of McMurdo (Antarctica's largest settlement): In the austral summer, 1,100. In the austral winter, about 200.

Nationality: No government owns Antarctica, but the Antarctic Treaty signed in 1959 by 12 countries agreed to reserve the continent for peaceful and scientific activities.

Wildlife: No flowering plants exist at McMurdo or elsewhere in the high-latitude Antarctic. The nearby wildlife is entirely dependent on the sea and includes emperor and Adélie penguins, Weddell seals, and skua birds.

Weather: In the summer, temperatures reach 30 and 40 degrees, but in winter, strong winds can bring the wind chill down under -100 degrees F. The sun is up 24 hours a day from mid-October until the end of February.

Currency: At McMurdo station U.S. currency is used. Two ATM

machines provide ready cash.

Social Life: A community chapel, two bars, a two-lane bowling alley, a ceramics room, three gymnasiums, a library, video rental, a coffee house/wine bar, Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, a recreation office that hosts bingo, yoga, trivia nights and many cross country skiing and hiking opportunities are available to McMurdo residents. The weekly Sunday night science lectures given by NSF grantees working in Antarctica often draw overflow audiences.

Main human activity: Antarctica has no permanent human inhabitants. Scientific research that can be performed only, or performed best, in the Antarctic is the principal human occupation, along with its operational support. McMurdo has the combined characteristics of a port city and a university campus.



Secretary James Roche retires

By Staff Sgt. April Lapetoda
89th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, Md. — Airmen, along with servicemembers from more than 14 nations, bid farewell to the 20th Secretary of the Air Force Tuesday.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz presented Air Force Secretary Dr. James Roche the Department of Defense award for distinguished public service upon his retirement. His wife, Diane, was recognized with the exceptional civilian service award.

Flanked by Airmen with an F/A-22 Raptor in the background, Air Force Chief of staff Gen. John P. Jumper was the host of the event and spoke on changes the Air Force has seen under the direction of Secretary Roche. He said the

secretary's personal touch affected each Airman's life.

"[Secretary Roche will be remembered for] all he has done for them, for our Air Force and for our nation," the general said.

Mr. Wolfowitz presided over the ceremony and hailed the secretary for his "out of the box" thinking, using the Air Force in a new combat role with the Army and for instilling unique improvements in education for enlisted Airmen.

The secretary was appointed in 2001 and has been responsible for the affairs of the Department of the Air Force, including the organizing, training, equipping and providing for the welfare of its nearly 370,000 Airmen on active duty, 180,000 Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Airmen, 160,000 civilians and their families.

January – National Eye Care Month

By Lt. Col. (Dr.) Greg Young
15th Medical Group

January is National Eye Care Month.

I'd like to spend some time talking about preventative vision care. Vision is a sense that has a profound impact on everyone's life. Of all the sensory information relayed to the brain, four-fifths is visual in origin. Can you imagine life as you know it without your sight?

Early detection and treatment of eye disorders is absolutely imperative to ensure good clinical outcome. The potential to continue seeing well is often directly related to how quickly the malady is detected and managed.

Both the American Optometry Association and the American Academy of Ophthalmology have determined that a typical non-symptomatic child should be seen at least once before starting school and at least every two years before 18 years old.

Between the ages of 18 and 40 years, it is recommended that the same non-problematic individual be seen every two to three years.

If the individual has a problem that needs monitoring or treatment, the frequency is dictated by the doctor ... the interval can be anywhere between daily to every year. At Hickam, patients are instructed to call the Central Appointments Desk at 448-6000 to schedule a routine eye examination. Of course, for emergency/urgent eye problems, the individual is to go directly to the Emergency Department at Tripler Army Medical Center.

"The exam at age three to five is much more than a routine screening," says Valerie Kattouf, O.D., an optometrist in private practice and on the faculty at Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago. "At this point we can check the child's ability to focus, to see clearly at all distances, and to use both eyes together as a team. We measure their depth perception and color vision, and we

test for nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, and eye muscle problems such as crossed-eyes and lazy eye." Parents should take their child before the three-year point, however, if they suspect problems. "There are a number of behaviors and signs in children ages 2 to 6 that will key parents that something may be wrong," says Dr. Kattouf. Behaviors that may be a cause for concern include:

- Squinting
- Sitting very close to the television
- Avoiding reading or looking at picture books
- Covering one eye when looking at something up close

• Complaints about headaches (In school children, note if these only occur at the end of school days and not on weekends.)

• A physical sign that is a cause for concern is when one or both eyes appear to be crossed, turning either in, out, up, or down.

One of the examinations that absolutely must be performed annually is the dilated eye evaluation of a diabetic patient. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of blindness in the United States and one of the most costly diseases to treat. Diabetes accounts for 5.8 percent of health care costs and approximately 5-7 million Americans have some form of diabetic retinopathy.

However, about half of adults whose diabetes puts them at risk are not receiving timely and recommended eye care to detect, diagnose, and treat this.

Clinical Practice Recommendations of the American Diabetes Association recommends a comprehensive dilated eye and visual examination performed annually by an optometrist or ophthalmologist for all patients age 12 and over who have had diabetes for 5 years, all patients over the age of 30, and any patient with visual symptoms and/or abnormalities.